

Doctoral Dissertation

Gerda Zimmermann

Analysis of Narrative at the Turn of the 19th–20th Century in Russian Literature.

Narrative Representation of Myth, Archetype and Incentives.

Doctoral School of Literary Studies

Professor Mr. István Lukács, Head of the Doctoral School

Russian Literature and Literary Studies

– Comparative Studies Doctoral Programme

Professor Ms. Katalin Kroó, Head of the Doctoral Programme

Members of the Committee:

Dr. Ms. Tünde Szabó PhD, assistant professor

Dr. Ms. Ibolya Bagi CSc, associate professor

Dr. habil Ms. Mária Gyöngyösi PhD, associate professor

Dr. Ms. Zsuzsanna Kalafatics PhD, assistant professor

Supervisor: Dr. habil Mr. István Nagy CSc, associate professor

Budapest, 27 October 2017.

I. Topic of research

The doctoral dissertation dealt with the analysis of narrative at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries through six works of prose. These works that present Russian provincial life belong to the provincial text type, and form a unified literary canon. The primary aim of the dissertation was to reveal what characterises the narrative within the frames of provincial texts. One of the referential points for the analysis of the provincial text is the Petersburg and Moscow text, the other is the narrative of the 19th century. The dissertation has a comparative attitude, as it emphasizes a shift in both the narrative and the text type. The interest of the research was to define the difference between the narrative at the turn of the two centuries and in the 19th century, and to find those key-moments that overwrite the analysed period (from 1890 to 1920). As the subtitle suggests, the research concentrated on three terms; incentives, myth and archetype, in addition to the narrative and the provincial text type. The content-wise analysis of these three important terms made the exploration of the typical narrative of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries possible.

II. The method of the research

The canon of the dissertation includes *Okurov city* and *Sketches and Stories* by Maxim Gorky; *Irrepressible tambourine* by Aleksey Remizov; *Provincial Tale* by Jevgeny Zamyatin; and *The End of a Petty Man* and *Records of some episodes made in the city of Gogulevo* by Andrei Petrovich Kovyakin by Leonid Leonov. These were analysed from the viewpoint of *character illustration*, *mode of speech* and *structure of space*. Poetical, narratological and space poetical approaches were connected to them to unfold the aspects.

When analysing *character illustration* the character and behaviour of the protagonists were examined, special focus was kept on the motives that define the types. These motives, since connected to incentives, in certain cases expand into archetypes. This gave space to an interpretation from the fields of collective unconscious and literary reminiscion besides the implied motivic analysis. The theoretical basis of the aspect is Jung`s theory on archetypes and its possible implication in literature (see Frye`s and Meletinsky`s studies).

Mode of speech is the aspect that focuses on how myth, archetype and incentives are represented linguistically. Characterising the speech of the narrator and the protagonists, and revealing the narratological structure of the narrative act, served as the illustration of the skaz

mode of speech at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries at the same time. Presenting Vinogradov's and Eichenbaum's well-known skaz theory with more modern approaches (studies by Muschenko, Schmid, Drozda, Kljuyev) the aim of this part was to feature the language of the narrative. In other words, the questions that arose were how different this mode of speech is compared to the classical skaz of Leskov; what the concept is that results in the shift; what those elements are that are responsible for the linguistic representation of this change. To reveal this a narratological approach was implied besides close-reading.

The last aspect gave chance to disclose the *structure of space* from a space poetical point of view. The Russian province means a city with or without a name, or a territory of more places. Special attention was paid to their closed spaces. This analysis is based on the reflections by Lotman, Schchukin and Regéczi. As Toporov and Bakhtin wrote, space and time cannot exist without each other. Therefore, when revealing the elements of space, the time concept of the works was also dealt with.

III. The result and the structure of the dissertation

In the first, introductory part of the dissertation, the provincial and megalopolis text types were presented with the aim of showing the differences between them at the end of the research. This is followed by reviewing the academic literature of the above mentioned three aspects. In the analysis part of the dissertation, the whole canon was examined along these aspects. So the introductory part is followed by the interpretation of the works using an analytical approach. After interpreting the works separately, a comparative analysis was also applied to show the cohesive elements of the canon and to define the shift from the narrative of the 19th century.

The central problem of the *character illustration* chapter is the little man. The motivic analysis highlighted the features of the little man, while the interpretations emphasized those elements and motives that made the difference clear between the little man of the 19th century and the little man at the turn of the two centuries.

In the chapter dealing with the *mode of speech*, the focus was on how skaz, which was characteristic in the case of 19th century prose, formed in these works. To consider this, the author–narrator–protagonist model served as a basis. The question here was whether and to what extent the three agents are present in the texts. Taking into consideration the basic

requirements of skaz defined by Schmid, the new features of skaz at the turn of the two centuries were also examined. Hence, skaz or skaz-like form is the mode of speech that represents both the way little man thinks and he is thought of within these works.

The chapter of *structure of space* was built around different aspects. The viewpoint from which space is illustrated, the borders of space and how it is separated from its surroundings, and how oppositions function in space were all looked at to define the quality of space. The movement of the protagonists and the way they take during the acts was also a part of the analysis. Lastly, particular attention was given to time and the concept the works had towards it to have a picture of the narrative of the provincial texts at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

IV. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the narrative of the examined period differs in essential points from the narrative of the 19th century. The little men in the works chosen into the literary canon of the dissertation start to behave according to their incentives, get away and/or excluded from the society they belonged to, become standstill puppets, get separated and alienated as they cannot cope with the change history brings into their life. From the 19th century heroes they turn into roles and lose their hero status. In these works, instead of emphasis on personalities or characters, only traits are illustrated. Moreover, these traits participate in forming the syuzhet and function in city space. The little man's space and his ability to move gradually disappears. This means the final station of the loss of personality, which infers that condolence disappears from the texts as well. The little man at the turn of the two centuries is surrounded by an atmosphere of mock and irony.

It is skaz the texts turn to to create this atmosphere. Skaz in this period can be seen as a mixture of characteristic and ornamental skaz. The works, as far as I am concerned, try to create a language that is capable of reflecting the change that history provokes in the provincial cities and how it effects the lives of men. The space representing provincial Russia can be featured as separated and secluded. Not only the space of the provincial cities, but the sweep of the characters and their mental map can also be characterised as limited. Parallel to this, time also changes, every day routine forms the act timeless, contradicting existence and every day life. This annulated time is in clear contrast with historical time, which highlights those events that bring essential change.

Though the historical events only infiltrate into the closed space of the provincial life, their significance is enormous. It provokes change, designates the borders of a new era. The encounter of this two time means the basis of the problem in the works. The narrative at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries creates a myth around this historical change, presenting that as an effect of the historical change human fates become pointless and hopeless, which can lead to loss of personality at the end. These works ascertain that historical time marked with events at the beginning of the century (the revolution of 1905 and 1917) makes the provincial city and life unbending, rigid and turns men into puppets or objects who, therefore, become unable to act. The collision of the two times, the necessity versus the inability to change is the phenomenon that determines the narrative at the turn of the two centuries regarding all three levels of character illustration, mode of speech and structure of space, and which explains the shift from 19th century narrative, designating its main points.

Publications connected to the topic of the dissertation:

The textforming character of archetype in Provincial tale by Jevgeny Zamyatin. In.: Történelem és egyéni lét: Hagyomány és megújulás a szláv népek történelmében és kultúrájában IV.: a 2014-es tudományos felolvasóülés anyaga, Szombathely, Szláv Történeti és Filológiai Társaság, 2014, 276–287.

Own-Foreign as a Tool For Forming Character and Syuzhet. In.: VIII International Symposium. Contemporary Issues of Literary Criticism: National Literatures and the Process of Cultural Globalization. Tbilisi, Institute of Literature Press, 2014, 291–298.

Own-Foreign opposition in The End of a Petty Man by Leonid Leonov. In.: Háborúk és békék. Hagyomány és megújulás a szláv népek történelmében és kultúrájában V.: a 2015-ös tudományos felolvasóülés anyaga. Szombathely, Szláv Történeti és Filológiai Társaság, 2015, 271–281.